

Dan Neyland (Lancaster University)

Speed cameras: a short story of mundane governance

Speed cameras form the focus for multiple modes of governance, involving relations between government departments and local/regional authorities (in this case between the Department for Transport and local Safety Camera Partnerships) and between local/regional authorities and specific populations (in this case between Partnerships and drivers). This paper will argue that in order to understand these emerging modes of governance and accountability we need to address the role and status of technologies involved, the relations drawn between national and local authorities and the relations constituted between (and constitutive of) authorities and mundane, ordinary social situations (such as driving a car, putting your foot on the brake, looking in the mirror, etc).

The paper will use the proliferation of speed cameras across the UK traffic network as an example of a rapidly developing socio-technical system of governance and accountability. The paper will argue that analysing mundane apprehensions of such socio-technical systems as speed cameras opens up new questions and considerations for understanding governance and accountability. The conclusion will suggest governance and accountability relations are far messier and more textured than conventional social science approaches admit.